

for something — they knew not exactly what —
 began to take
 possession of men's hearts and spread like an
 epidemic from
 village to village and from land to land." ¹

What we see here is the power of mere
 gregariousness, the
 impulse of acting in a crowd, without knowledge or
 purpose. The
 mere sense of being in the current movement, or "
 in the fashion,"
 is a pleasure. When the movement is great in its
 compass and
 the numbers involved there is an exhilaration
 about being in it.
 If the notions by which it is enthused are great,
 or holy and
 noble, in form and pretense, even if not really so, it
 may become
 demonic, and it may accomplish incredible things.
 We had a
 grand illustration of this at the outbreak of the Civil
 War, in 1861,
 both in the North, and South. Dissent on both sides
 was over-
 whelmed and all were swept away into the
 prevailing current.

217. *The* mendicant orders. The mendicant
 orders responded
 to the deepest popular faiths and highest
 standards of the
 thirteenth century. Francis of Assisi (f 1226) took
 up the notion
 that it was wrong to own property, or at least
 meritorious to re-
 nounce it, and affirmed that Christ and his
 apostles repudiated
 all property and lived on alms. The Timotheists of
 the fifth
 century had held this notion, but were rated as
 heretics.² Poverty,
 for Francis, did not mean a little property, but
 absolute rejection
 of all property. This was necessarily only a pose. He
 had to use
 other men's property, the use being right.
 Therefore he could
 only renounce productive labor. The popular
 religious temper of
 the time revered simplicity, humility, self-denial, and
 renunciation
 of "the world" as especially evangelical virtues.
 They were
 thought to be summed up in poverty. That Francis
 was a hero

of this type of religion has been universally admitted. The virtues were just the ones which the Roman court did not show. Jacques de Vitry, an enthusiastic preacher against the Albigenses, went through Italy to Palestine in 1216. He left a journal³ in which he recorded his sadness at observing that, at the papal court, all were busy with secular affairs, kings and kingdoms, quarrels and lawsuits, so that it was almost impossible to speak

¹ Lea, *Inquis.*, I, 268.

² Lea, *Sacerd. Celib.*, 377.

³ *JVouv. Mem. de VAcad. des Sciences, Lettres^ et Beaux Arts deBelgique*> XXIII, 30.